

## SOVIET POLICY IN WARTIME

When growing tension was manifested in the north of Iran in the summer of 1945, an urgent need arose to keep Western public opinion properly informed. Yet nothing could be done since foreign correspondents were paralyzed by constant Soviet vetoes. Sir Reader Bullard, the British Ambassador, took the matter so much to heart that he extended a special invitation to Alexander Clifford, a correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, to visit Iran and to report to the British public upon leaving the country. Clifford's visit bore fruit. In an article on Iran he bluntly warned the readers that "queer, sinister things have been happening [in Iran] lately and the Persians are badly scared." Among the "queer" things he mentioned Soviet censorship, Russia's reluctance to quit northern Iran, and her open back-ing of the antigovernment Tudeh party. His article was quoted in the American press,<sup>19</sup> and for the first time after a long period of darkness, some light was shed on the disturbing situation in this region.

With regard to Iran herself the immunity of the Tass Agency from censorship produced most unfortunate effects. It often made ineffective the working of Iran's own censorship, which, as described earlier, applied *post factum* in the form of suspensions of newspapers by government order. A normal course of events was as follows: An Iranian newspaper would publish an article containing violent criticism of the government as dishonest, "fascist," and "reactionary." The government would suspend the paper in order to keep spirits calmed. A few days later Tass would release an article published in *Izvestia* or *Pravda* in which the accusations against the Iranian

government were repeated almost word by word from the Iranian paper. As the Iranian and British censors could not veto Tass dispatches, the Soviet article could be released to the whole of the Iranian press, and consequently it would be very unsafe for the government to suspend all papers that published it.

A word may be added about the position of smaller Allied nations in this connection. It was evident that from 1943 on a crisis was mounting between the governments-in-exile of Poland, Yugoslavia, and Greece on the one hand and Russia on the other. This crisis was of great interest to the Iranian public inasmuch as the handling

19 *Time*, Aug. 13, 1945.